

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 17, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. POLK made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 156.]

*The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of Joshua Shaw, report:*

This claim is based upon the use, by the government of the United States, of the memorialist's invention of the copper percussion caps and locks for small arms, and percussion locks and wafer primers for cannon. The facts of the invention by Mr. Shaw, of its great utility and of its extensive use by the government, have been fully admitted by the Ordnance department. In 1847 Congress passed an act (9 Stat., 684,) authorizing the Secretary of War to examine the claim of Mr. Shaw, and directing its payment, to an amount not exceeding \$25,000.

Under this act \$18,000 was allowed and paid; and the present application is for the payment of the remaining \$7,000.

In the report accompanying the above act the committee say: "The experiments made by Mr. Shaw, at the instance of the government, fully realized the high expectations of the inventor, and established, to the complete satisfaction of the government, the utility of his inventions," (Report H. R. No. 53, 2d session, 28th Congress.) And the head of the Ordnance office says: "It is, therefore, due to Mr. Shaw to state that this office decidedly recognizes him as having a just claim on the government for the use of his inventions."

It has been the practice of the government to make liberal compensation to inventors for the use of their inventions, when they have proved to be important to the public service and defence. Ten thousand dollars was paid for the right to use Bishop's portable derrick, (9 Stat., 375;) fifteen thousand dollars for the use of a machine for making percussion caps, (Priv. Stat. of 1854, p. 375;) seventy-six thousand two hundred dollars to R. Fulton's heirs "for the great benefit conferred on the country by his inventions in the application of steam navigation, &c.," (9 Stat., 66;) besides many other instances.

In a letter dated January 12, 1855, Colonel Craig, the head of the Ordnance office, says: "It is my opinion that the whole amount mentioned in the act of February 20, 1846—viz: twenty-five thousand

dollars—is not, when compared with gratuities for other improvements in military weapons, two great a compensation to Joshua Shaw for the past and future use of his invention.”

In view of all the facts, the committee fully concur in the above opinion of Colonel Craig, and report a bill for the payment of the seven thousand dollars now claimed.